

THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

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of Castile. Another was Naples, under the auspices of the House of Anjou. The third was Provence, the bridge between France and Spain, where the local Jewish scholars (particularly of the family of Ibn Tibbon) translated large numbers of texts from the Arabic of their native Spain into Hebrew, for the benefit of their co-religionists north of the Pyrenees. These were frequently rendered subsequently into Latin at the request of Christian savants. Here, too, worked Jacob ben Makhir¹, a prolific translator in all branches of knowledge, whose original contributions to science (as will be seen) were also of the utmost importance. But even in Northern Europe the process was repeated. Thus, in 1273-4 a Jew named Vives translated into French in the house of Henri Bate, at Malines, several books by the Spanish Jewish globe-trotter, exegete and philosopher, Abraham ibn Ezra. These works were subsequently used by Bate to good effect in his own writings.

The contemporary appreciation of this activity may be conveyed by an enumeration of the patrons under whom these Jewish translators worked, many of whom were normally far from friendly towards the Jews—men like Raymund, Archbishop of Toledo in the twelfth century, the Emperor Frederick II, Manfred of Sicily, Charles of Naples and Alfonso the Wise of Castile in the thirteenth, Robert of Naples and Pedro III of Aragon

in the fourteenth.

The case of Alfonso the Wise was particularly interesting. He was not himself conspicuously pro-Jewish; indeed, the legislation contained in his famous code, the *Siete Partidas*, was notably intolerant. But he realised painfully how backward his kingdom was in

¹ [The vital dates of persons mentioned in this work will be given in the text only when it is necessary for understanding the chronological setting. In other cases reference should be made to the Index.]